UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Uri Mayer, *conductor*

Saturday, September 28, 2024 at 8:00 pm | Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen St East

The UTSO concerts are made possible in part by a generous gift from Neville Austin.

PROGRAM

Fantasy on a Theme by Beethoven

Larysa Kuzmenko (b.1956)

Larysa Kuzmenko's Fantasy on a Theme by Beethoven.
By arrangement with Counterpoint Music Library Services.

Symphony No.1, Op.21 in C Major

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

I. Adagio molto – Allegro con brio
II. Andante cantabile con moto
III. Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace
IV. Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace

Intermission

Symphony No.5, Op.64 in E minor

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

I. Andante – Allegro con anima
II. Andante cantanbile, con alcuna licenza
III. Valse: Allegro moderato
IV. Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (UTSO)

Uri Mayer, *conductor*

Violin I
Jeanny Jung, *concertmaster*
Bridget Alexander
Maya Budzinski
Caleb Chiu
Siri Ducharme-Leblanc
Melie Inageda
Marija Ivicevic
Selen Nsabiyeze
Sophie Reimer-Epp
William Sale
Kasey Scoboria
Christine Yanfei Wang
Esther Yao
Qiqi Zhang

Violin II
Kai Schulz Rousseau, *principal*
Samantha Cardwell
Viviana Xiao Qi Chan
Simon Hauber
Natasha Hendra
Lauren Da-Hyun Lee
Cameron Liao
Elana You-Lan Lin
Natasha Morozora
Monica Lakshmi Vipanchi Rallabhandi
Deborah Alexandra White
Mizuki Yaesawa
Amanda Yee

Viola
Colman Yang, *principal*
Ji-A Choi
Ruby, Jackson
Gavin, Li
Gabriella Caitlyn Liu
Meika Sonntag
Tate Zdanowicz

Cello
Mario Rodriguez McMillan, *principal*
Antonia Cambre
Maren Helyar
Chloe Liang
Caitlyn Liu
Tuuli Olo
Tomas Pena Paz Y Mino
Ryan Wu
Cindy Zhang

Double Bass
Benjamin Kemppainen, *principal*
Jude Littlefield Buschlen
Marcus Chan
Aidan Lai Chak Chong
Sean Liu
Liv McIsaac
Danylo Tkaczyk

Flute
Rowan Froh
Rachel Roe-Wu
Anwen Robertson
Eleanor Song

Piccolo
Eleanor Song

Oboe
Jason Fan
Jasmine Noone
Nicholas Pomares

Clarinet
Farimah Khorrami
Andrzej Jozef Osko
Niki Tang

Bassoon
Kelton Hopper
Taran Massey-Singh
Jaclyn Yee

Horn
Anik Caissie
Julia Fowell
Finn Parks
Dia Tam

Trumpet
Justin Ko
Grace Locker
Andrew Mendis
Shaw Nicholson

Trombone
Benjamin Glauser
Duncan MacFarlane
Ethan Whitlow

Tuba
Elizabeth Fair

Timpani
Elyssa Arde
Madison Keats
Yi-Hsuan Lo

PROGRAM NOTES

Fantasy on a Theme by Beethoven
Larysa Kuzmenko (b.1956)

The Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra commissioned me to write an eight-minute work, featuring the oboe, inspired by Beethoven's Symphony No.1. I chose to write a theme, and variations loosely based on the main theme of the first movement. (Beethoven's original theme is C G B C C, while my version is D Ab C D D.)

The theme goes through different permutations, but remains recognizable, largely because of its shape and rhythm. The work opens with the theme being presented in a fugal texture by the strings alone. There are variations that feature the solo oboe, and others that feature horns, trumpets, and even timpani, which, appropriately, was the first featured as a solo orchestral instrument by Beethoven in his ninth symphony. The biggest challenge when writing this piece was being restricted to Beethoven's instrumentation-the orchestra in the classical era was much smaller than the contemporary orchestra. My other orchestral scores generally include trombones, bass clarinet, tuba and a variety of percussion instruments.

Larysa Kuzmenko / 2019

Symphony No.1, Op.21 in C Major
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Beethoven grew up knowing and hearing the symphonies of Mozart and Haydn. When he was born, Mozart was busy writing his Salzburg symphonies. When he was a teenager, Mozart was writing his extraordinary late symphonies. Haydn had many years before he honed his symphonic skills. In 1770, Haydn already had 49 symphonies under his belt and was on his way to write 106 (if one includes the Hoboken categorization). In 1795, when Beethoven began to sketch a symphony, Haydn produced the Drumroll and London symphonies: numbers 103 and 104.

It is not surprising that Beethoven's First Symphony did not appear until 1800. The success of the two classical masters was very likely intimidating. It is also not surprising that his First Symphony bore many of the hallmarks of classical style he had studied with both Haydn (unsuccessfully, as they did not get along) and Mozart (although the latter is not fully documented). Furthermore, it is surprising that with his debut into the symphonic genre, he was hailed as their successor and a voice of the future. That newness emerged in the very first measures of Opus 21. It was not a full-fledged echo of poise and obedience to classical values. Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 premiered on April 2, 1800, at the Burgtheater in Vienna (there were no concert halls at that time), which the composer had rented for a concert to promote his own music. The *Allegemeine Musikalische Zeitung* reported "this was the most interesting concert in a very long time." Ironically, just as he was entering a successful phase in his compositions, he was given the bad news that his hearing problem was incurable. By 1802, in the Heiligenstadt Testament he was even considering suicide. His commitment to the art of music and his place therein saved him from himself.

The first movement marked *Adagio molto-Allegro con brio*, begins with a twelve-measure introduction; in place of the classical style introduction, Beethoven opens with a series of chords coming from winds and horns with *pizzicato* accompaniment from strings. The first iteration is

dominant-tonic movement in F major. The second touches on C, but the last moves strongly into G major. What this means is that the composer is breaking new ground, and shying away, misleading us, from the home key of C major. One critic mentioned “such a beginning is not suitable for the opening of a grand concert in a spacious opera house” (Christopher Gibbs: Program notes, Philadelphia Orchestra, 2006). Additionally unusual are the dynamic markings of *fp* (a sudden loud to soft) in each measure. At the *Allegro con brio* marking, Beethoven finally assures the C major tonality with a soft introduction of the first theme presented by violins. Herein is the beginning of the corpus of the work. The second more lyrical theme is introduced by oboe in conversation with the flute. From this point forward, the music behaves in classical direction and format, but with more dynamic contrasts and harmonic colorations than usual. The development is concise, focusing on the first theme, and the recap expands the initial ideas.

The second movement, *Andante cantabile con moto*, provides a simple theme, which is the subject of the entire movement. Hushed trumpets and drums add delicate coloration.

Beethoven titles his third movement *Menuetto* (an older form of minuet). It is a far cry from the anticipated courtly stately dance. This music rushes headlong into a sprightly scherzo-type affair: animated, energetic, and relentless. “Although the DNA of Beethoven’s First Symphony was classical there were definite mutations. Especially in the scherzo. Although marked as a *menuetto* the music was not majestic, poised or dance like. It was fast, marked *molto* and *vivace* to encourage a brisk pace. Beethoven ‘s metronome markings for allegro usually spanned 80 to 96. And with the modifiers the composer was wanting more zest. Overall, this movement was a fitting goodbye to the eighteenth century” (Maynard Solomon). The graceful trio offers relaxation and serenity before the energy re-ignites until the finish.

Like the first movement, Beethoven teases us with a slow beginning before lifting the curtain on an exciting *Allegro molto e vivace*. Opus 21 concludes in high spirits featuring violin flurries in rapidly moving notes starting softly and scaling the heights into louder dynamics, the so-called Mannheim rocket. The Mannheim school (mid-18th century) created several orchestral innovations, which were dramatic, exciting, thrillers and novel for their time. The “rocket” is indeed like fireworks, and Beethoven launches a lot of them in this movement. Listen for the changes in tempi, as if gathering breath before dashing onward. Another Mannheim novelty is also present: the General Pause, sudden cessation of all sound and then almost immediate re-entry into high-octane movement.

© *Marianne Williams Tobias, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, 2015*

Symphony No.5, Op.64 in E minor
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

“I would like to take this opportunity to clear up [those who] … erroneously thought to be touched by the spirit of pessimism,” wrote Dmitri Shostakovich. “Tchaikovsky was sensitive to the *tragedy*, the conflict in the development of human life, both personal and social (emphasis mine).” Nowhere is this more evident than in his three “mature” symphonies. With its triumphant conclusion, Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony shares a similar outlook with his Fourth. Yet its dark opening has more in common with his Sixth. Straddling the two, the Fifth Symphony likewise shares similar contemplations on fate and death. As with all of Tchaikovsky’s works, melody is at the forefront: tense and uncertain in the first movement, yearning in the second, graceful in the third, and unrestrained in the finale. Also typical of Tchaikovsky is the expression of raw

emotion through these melodies, rather than a philosophical contemplation through the symphony's organization (as the Germans were known to do).

The Fifth Symphony is cyclical: that is, the opening theme reappears throughout all four movements of the symphony. One could trace the symphony's emotional journey by means of this theme. In the first movement it appears only as an introduction to set the scene and is truly pessimistic (despite Shostakovich's argument; but wait…!). If possible, it becomes even darker in the second movement. It intrudes twice to rebuke the folly of resisting fate. In the third movement, one sees only a ghost of the theme, at the very end. So far, this theme had not been entirely comfortable in the music; it appeared on the outer fringes of movements one and three, and as rude intrusions in the second. It is only in the finale that the theme arrives home, being fully integrated into the movement's structure. Moreover, its previously pessimistic outlook is transformed into an ever-growing celebration. Unlike the Fourth Symphony, where hints of darkness cloud the triumph, and the Sixth, which ends without hope or redemption, the finale of the Fifth Symphony is unrestrained optimism. In the Fifth Symphony at least, the conflict of which Shostakovich spoke ends with a confirmation of life.

Program notes by Matthew Poon, University of Toronto alumnus.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PERFORMANCE COLLECTION
Karen Wiseman, *librarian*

CONCERT OFFICE
Eric Chow, *supervisor*
Cory Bertrand, *front of house coordinator*

PERFORMANCE OFFICE
Amanda Eyer Haberman, *performance assistant*

BIOGRAPHIES

Larysa Kuzmenko is a Toronto-based composer, pianist and Juno nominee. Her music has been commissioned, performed, broadcast and recorded by many outstanding musicians all over the world. She has appeared as a pianist in several countries, and has performed at Carnegie Hall, St. Lawrence Centre, England, USA, Roy Thomson Hall, Massey Hall and several other Canadian venues. She is currently on staff at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, where she teaches piano, harmony, and composition.

Her works demonstrate a strong affinity towards the mainstream of classical music. She imbues her music with a strong melodic sense, and a firm rooting in traditional, albeit extended tonal processes. She has been awarded commissions from the Ontario Arts Council, CBC, Laidlaw foundation, and from private commissioners. She was a composer in residence at the Memorial University in Newfoundland in 2010. Her music is published by Boosey and Hawkes, Plangere, and Frederic Harris. Her solo piano works "In Memoriam to the Victims of Chernobyl" and "Mysterious Summer's Night" have become standard repertoire for pianists. These pieces receive over a hundred performances a year. Her choral works "Winds" and "Stars" are performed regularly all over the world with sales of over a thousand copies a year.

In 2011, Larysa received a Juno nomination for her "Piano Concerto" which was recorded on CD by well-known Ukrainian Canadian pianist Christina Petrowska Quilico. Most recently, she was commissioned, through a grant from the Ontario Arts Council, to write a work for the Toronto Symphony's 90th anniversary. This work, "Behold the Night" was composed for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Children's Choir. It was extremely well received by the audience and was broadcast on CBC. Oscar winner Christopher Plummer was on the same show as the premiere of "Behold the Night". During the after-show dinner, he told the composer that "Shakespeare would have been very proud of Larysa Kuzmenko's musical setting of the text to 'A Midsummer's Night Dream'". Critic Colin Eatock from the Globe and Mail wrote, "The work is as charming and colourful as any film score by Danny Elfman or John Williams".

Some prominent ensembles and soloists who have performed her works include, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, directed by Peter Oundjian and Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra directed by Bramwell Tovey, Thunder Bay Orchestra directed by Jeoffrey Moule, Gryphon Trio, Composer's Orchestra directed by Gary Kulesha, cellists Shauna Rolston, Kristine Bogyo, and Kaori Yamagami, pianists Anton Kuerti and Andrew Burashko, the Elmer Esler Singers, and the Elora Festival Singers just to name a few.

Uri Mayer, Professor and Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto since 2014, has taught on the faculties of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Rice University Shepherd School of Music in Houston, McGill University in Montreal and at the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music (GGS).

Renowned for his strong command of broad symphonic, operatic and ballet repertoire, Mayer has guest conducted many of the leading orchestras around the world including the Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver symphonies in Canada, the Houston and Utah symphonies in the U.S., London Mozart Players and the English Symphony Orchestra, NDR Philharmonie in Hannover, Slovak Philharmonic, Budapest, Belgrade and Sophia Philharmonics, Israel Philharmonic, NHK Orchestra and Osaka Symphony in Japan and National Symphony of Taiwan. He served as Principal Conductor of the Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra in Osaka, Japan and Artistic Director of the Israel Sinfonietta. In Canada, Mayer was Music Director of the Edmonton Symphony and Orchestra London.

Mayer has led numerous opera productions in Canada, the U.S, the Netherlands, Hungary and Israel including The Barber of Seville, Così fan tutte, Don Giovanni, The Flying Dutchman, Salome and The Cunning Little Vixen.

Some of the distinguished soloists who have collaborated with him include Elly Ameling, Kathleen Battle, Maureen Forrester, Frederica von Stade, Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman, Peter Oundjian, Mstislav Rostropovich, Yo-Yo Ma, Claudio Arrau, Emanuel Ax and Sir András Schiff. Mayer has recorded for the Arabesque, CBC, Denon Japan, Hungaroton and Koch labels. Under his direction the Edmonton Symphony became one of Canada's most frequently played orchestras on radio. They were awarded the Grand Prix du Disque-Canada for the recording of Orchestral Suites of the British Isles and nominated for a Juno Award for their Great Verdi Arias with Louis Quilico.

In 2009, the University of Western Ontario conferred on Mayer a Doctor of Music Honoris causa in recognition of his contribution to the musical life in Canada.